

After Action Report (AAR)

The After Action Report documents the performance of exercise related tasks and makes recommendations for improvements. The following AAR format is suggested by U.S. Homeland Security (outlined in U.S. Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program - Volume 2).

Executive Summary:

Exercise Overview:

Exercise Goals & Objectives:

Exercise Events Synopsis:

Analysis of Mission Outcomes:

Analysis of Critical Task Performance:

- Task Number and Description
- Issue Number and Description
- References
- Summary
- Consequence
- Analysis
- Recommendation
- Improvement Action

Conclusion:

After Action Report Template

Executive Summary

Note: The “Executive Summary” section should be used to briefly describe a summary of the information contained in an After Action Report (AAR) to highlight the way in which the report will assist agencies in striving for preparedness excellence and should include the following:

- *Brief overview of the exercise*
- *Major strengths demonstrated during the exercise*
- *Areas that require improvement*

Chapter 1: Exercise Overview

Note: The “Exercise Overview” section should be used to briefly describe the following:

- *Describes the specific details of the exercise*
- *Identifies the agencies and organizations that participated in the exercise*
- *Describes how the exercise was structured*
- *Describes how the exercise was implemented and carried out*

Listed below are the exercise specifications that are required in the AAR “Exercise Overview” section. The information contained in this section will be gathered in a database on the National Exercise Program and will be available for planning, scheduling, and evaluation purposes.

Exercise Name: *List formal name of exercise(s).*

Duration: *List the total length of the exercise(s).*

Exercise Date: *List the Month, Day, and Year of the exercise(s).*

Sponsor: *List the Federal sponsoring agency of the exercise(s).*

Type of Exercise: *List the type of exercise from the seven available exercise types in the HSEEP as described in Volume I, on Page 19: Seminar, Workshop, Drill, Game, Tabletop, Functional Exercise, or Full-Scale Exercise.¹*

Funding Source: *List the agency receiving the funding for the exercise(s)*

Program: *List the name of the program under which the funding for the exercise is originating from.*

Focus: *List the appropriate focus of the exercise: Response, Recovery, Prevention, or Other.*

Classification: *List the appropriate classification of the exercise: Unclassified (U), For Official Use Only (FOUO), or By Invitation Only (IO).*

Scenario: *List the scenario of the exercise: Chemical release or threat (C), Biological release or threat (B), Radiological release or threat (R), Nuclear release or threat (N), Explosive release or threat (E), Cyber (Y), or Other/Specify (O).*

Location: *List all applicable information regarding the specific location of the Exercise, including the City, State, Federal Region, International Country, Military Installation*

Participating Organizations: *List the organization or agency names of the Cosponsors of the exercise, including the Local, State, and Federal agencies as well as Contract Support, if applicable.*

Participants: *List the individual participating organizations or agencies, including the Federal, State, and Local agencies as well as International Agencies, if applicable.*

Number of Participants: *List the total number of players, victim role players, controllers, evaluators, and observers.*

Exercise Overview: *Briefly describe the exercise components and what it was designed to accomplish.*

Exercise Evaluation: *Briefly describe the specific evaluative tools in place for this exercise, including where evaluators were positioned and the date of the Exercise Evaluation Conference that follows the exercise.*

Chapter 2: Exercise Goals and Objectives

***Note:** The “Exercise Goals and Objectives” section should be used to briefly list the goals and objectives for the exercise. These are developed during the exercise planning and design phase and are used to define the scope and content of the exercise as well as the agencies and organizations that will participate. List each Goal followed by the Objective for the respective Goal.*

Chapter 3: Exercise Events Synopsis

Note: The “Exercise Events Synopsis” section should be used to provide an overview of the scenario used to facilitate exercise play and the actions taken by the players to respond to the simulated terrorism attack. The activities are presented in the general sequence and timeline that they happened at each site. The events synopsis provides officials and players with an overview of what happened at each location and when. It is also used to analyze the effectiveness of the response, especially the time sensitive actions. It provides a means of looking at the ramifications of one action not happening when expected on actions taken by other players and on the overall response. The “Exercise Events Synopsis” should include the synopsis, the modules for the exercise, and a timeline of events for each element of play.

Chapter 4: Analysis of Mission Outcomes

***Note:** The “Analysis of Mission Outcomes” section provides an analysis of how well the participating agencies/ jurisdictions addressed the mission outcomes. Mission outcomes are those broad outcomes or functions that the public expects from its public officials and agencies. As defined in the Office of Domestic Preparedness’ (ODP’s) Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program – Volume II: Exercise Evaluation and Improvement, the mission outcomes include: prevention/deterrence, emergency assessment, emergency management, hazard mitigation, public protection, victim care, investigation/ apprehension, recovery/remediation. The exercise goals and objectives will define the mission outcomes that are addressed by the exercise and that should be analyzed in this section of the AAR.*

This section analyzes how well the participating jurisdictions as a whole achieved the expected mission outcomes in their response to the simulated terrorist event. The focus of this analysis is on outcomes rather than processes. The mission outcomes are actions the public expects from its public officials and agencies when faced with a terrorist threat or attack. Results for each mission outcome should be summarized by outcome area. A detailed analysis of the activities and processes that contributed to results related to the mission outcomes will be in the following chapter.

Chapter 5: Analysis of Critical Task Performance

Note: The “Analysis of Critical Task Performance” section reviews performance of the individual tasks, as defined in the evaluation guides. Each task that was identified by the exercise planning team as a critical task to be performed to respond to the simulated attack defined by the scenario should be discussed in this section. Those tasks that were performed as expected require only a short write up that describes how the task was performed and generally would be not be followed by recommendations. For tasks that were not performed as expected, the write-up should describe what happened or did not happen and the root causes for the variance from the plan or established procedures or agreements. Recommendations for improvement should be presented for these tasks. This section should indicate if the variance from expected performance resulted in an improved response, which may result in a recommendation that plans or procedures be changed. Innovative approaches that were used during the response should be highlighted and described. To facilitate tracking of recommendations and improvements, acronyms should be spelled out in each recommendation.

At some point in the future, when the performance criteria have been validated and enhanced, jurisdictions will be asked to rate the performance of each task and the provide a overall performance rating for the exercise.

Following the review and validation of the draft report findings by key officials from the participating agencies/jurisdictions (during the debriefing meeting), the officials define the actions that will be taken to address the recommendations.

These improvement actions are presented following each recommendation and include the action, the responsible party/agency, and the timeline for completion.

Below is the format that each Task should be presented in.

Task: *List the overall task and number.*

Issue: *List the issue number and statement.*

Reference: *List the reference Exercise Evaluation Guide (EEG) task and number.*

Summary of Issue: *Briefly describe the issue.*

Consequence: *Briefly state the consequence of the action.*

Analysis: *Briefly explain the issue and the consequences.*

Recommendations: *List the recommendation that would help to rectify the issue.*

Actions: *List the action steps required to ensure that the recommendation is followed.*

Conclusions

Note: *The “Conclusions” section of the report should be used as a summary of all the sections of the AAR. It should include the following:*

- *Participants demonstrated capabilities*
- *Lessons learned for improvement and major recommendations*
- *A summary of what steps should be taken to ensure that the concluding results will help to further refine plans, procedures, training for this type of incident.*

Improvement Plan

The improvement plan outlines the actions that the exercising jurisdiction plans to take to address recommendations contained in the after action report. It lists the recommendation, action and party responsible for implementing the recommendation.

Examples include: updates to existing plans, policies, procedures, protocols, systems, equipment, training, and facilities developed to mitigate against, prepare for, respond to, and recover from the effects of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) terrorism.